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AN ADDRESS
OF
CHARLES HUDSON, OF MASS.,
TO
THE CITIZENS OF THE FIFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF
THAT STATE,
ON
RETIRING FROM THE OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS.

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ADDRESS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE FIFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.

20, 2, 44
In retiring, under circumstances somewhat peculiar, from the station I have for some years past occupied by your kindness, I have thought that a few words from me would be neither unseasonable nor improper. Being impressed with the propriety of rotation in office, I signified, more than a year ago, to many of my friends in the district, my intention of declining a re-nomination to Congress. But I received from every one with whom I communicated, an assurance that no change was desired by the people in the district; and among those who gave this assurance, and who urged me not to decline, were several of the warm personal friends of my successor. I was induced by these representations to remain silent, and let the good people in the district do as they pleased in relation to the selection of a candidate, though I had assured the chairman of the district committee that it was my personal wish to decline. I was again selected by the convention, and did not feel at liberty to decline a nomination which, I was assured, was cordially made.

The result of the election is known to you all. Had I been defeated on the ordinary political issues, or had there been nothing peculiar in the character of the canvass, you would never have heard a word from me on the subject. But I have been charged with basely deserting my principles; with wantonly betraying the interests of the State; and with wickedly sacrificing the cause of freedom at the shrine of slavery.

On these charges all the changes have been rung, and the cry of *cowardice* and *pro-slavery*, *desertion* and *treachery*, has been reiterated from day to day during the whole canvass. I cheerfully recognise the accountability of the representative, and the right and duty of the people to discard their public agents whenever they become unfaithful; and, if I have been guilty of the charges preferred against me by some of my former friends, I justly merit, not only what I have received at their hands, but the execration of the whole people of the Commonwealth. But on what overt act of mine do they rely to prove me guilty of these misdemeanors. To what chapter of my political life do they point to sustain their allegations? Have they been able to produce one act of omission or commission, during the seven years I have served them in Congress? Not one, that I am aware of. The sum of my offending, as you all know, consists in this: I preferred Gen. Taylor to Martin Van Buren. I exercised the right of every freeman, and gave my vote in accordance with the dictates of my own conscience. Though opposed to the nomination of Gen. Taylor, being satisfied, after the nomination, that either he or Gen. Cass would be the next President, I felt it my duty to support Gen. Taylor, because I believed him to be a better man, and more sound than Gen. Cass even on the Wilmot proviso, which with me was a controlling consideration. Such was the conclusion to which my mind was brought, on a full examination of the subject, soon after the nomination was made at Philadelphia.

I saw at once, before I had declared my resolution to any man, that an organization would be made in Massachusetts in opposition to Gen. Taylor. In fact I heard, a week before the Convention, that a preliminary meeting had been held in Boston, at which this course had been agreed upon, and that a committee had been appointed to prepare an address to the people. I saw, soon after the Convention, the notification of a meeting at Worcester, to ratify the nomination; and also a call for a popular convention, at the same place, to repudiate it. Several of my former friends in Massa-

chusetts wrote me, asking me what course I intended to pursue; some urging me to oppose General Taylor, and others advising me not to commit myself on either side; suggesting that both parties would take me up if I remained silent. In a few days I received a letter from the committee of arrangements for the ratification meeting at Worcester, and also a letter from the committee of arrangements for the mass convention at the same place, each inviting me to attend their respective meetings, and each expecting from me some expression of opinion. I was aware that a storm was gathering in my own State and district, and by standing aloof I might, under the peculiar condition of the parties, obtain the support of both. But I could be guilty of no concealment; I could practise no duplicity. As then advised, I was satisfied that General Taylor was preferable to General Cass; and, occupying the position I did, I thought that the people had a right to know my views upon the subject, and that it would be unmanly and dishonorable in me to attempt to conceal them. I accordingly replied to both committees, stating to them frankly my honest convictions on the whole subject matter, and informing them that I preferred General Taylor to General Cass, especially on the anti-slavery or Wilmot proviso question. I said, in one of these letters which was published at the time:

"Being unalterably opposed to the further extension of slave territory, and an advocate for free soil and free labor, I feel it to be my duty to do all that can honorably be done to oppose the election of the democratic candidate, whose policy I believe would be exclusively southern. General Taylor has pledged himself to sustain the popular will as expressed by the representatives of the people, and administer the Government on the principles of the fathers of the Republic. I believe he is less belligerent than the democratic candidate; that he would be more inclined to peace; less disposed to annex foreign territory; and, on the great subject of slavery itself, would take a more honorable course than his democratic competitor."

Such was the ground taken by me as early as the 22d of June. I took this position at that time after serious and mature reflection, and nothing has since occurred to shake my faith in the soundness of the position. I looked upon the question then, as I do now, as one of a practical character. The nomination of General Taylor had changed the aspect of the whole affair, and, as a practical man, I must change with it. I was compelled to meet the case as it was then presented, and I endeavored to do the best I could for the occasion. I acted frankly and without reserve; and I have seen no occasion to reproach myself for the course I have pursued. If I erred at all, it was in confiding in certain men in my own district who have shown themselves *unworthy of confidence*; but it is better, perhaps, to be betrayed occasionally, than to be so suspicious as never to trust.

The manner in which I have discharged the duties of the station you have assigned me, is so well known to the intelligent people of the district that I would not, under ordinary circumstances, allude to it; but as I have been arraigned by some of my former friends on the charge of infidelity or treachery on the subject of slavery or free soil, I shall, I trust, be pardoned if I refer to my congressional course on this subject. I have always been opposed to the institution of slavery. I have regarded it as a political and moral wrong; and, since I have been in Congress, the only field on which a northern man can meet it as a practical question, I have done what I could do, legally and constitutionally, to prevent its extension and to resist the encroachments of its power. I have not, like some individuals in and out of Congress, embraced every opportunity to drag this subject into every discussion, whether it properly belonged there or not. I have not introduced it for the mere purpose of producing agitation and exciting ill will; because I have been persuaded that such a policy would naturally tend to defeat the object in view, and so strengthen the institution in question. I have regarded it as an important subject, which should be approached with wisdom and prudence, and disposed of in a constitutional manner; and where I could meet the subject fairly, and with any reasonable prospect of doing good, I have not failed to do it. And while I have avoided personal altercation, and refrained from denunciation and bitterness, I have met directly every question involving the institution, and have expressed my views

without fear or reserve ; and hence I have, in some instances at least, had a fair and attentive hearing, when those who pursue a violent and irritating course would not be listened to at all by the very men we wish to influence. My course has left no doubt upon the minds of those with whom I have acted in regard to my views and policy. I have been regarded by all northern men as *firm*, and by ultra southern men as *obstinate*.

In the first speech I made in Congress, December 27, 1841, though the question was that of the tariff, I introduced the subject of slavery. Mr. RHETT, of S. C., and other gentlemen from that section of the Union, had said that a protective tariff was a tax upon *southern labor* to increase *northern capital*. To this position I replied: "I wish to assail no section of the country ; but I am compelled to say that the truth is the very reverse of this. It is southern capital against northern labor. From a full view of our manufactures, it will be seen that our fabrics are, in a great degree, the product of labor, and not of capital. But how is it with the products of the South ? Take their great staple, cotton ; of what is that the product ? Of labor or of capital ? Of capital almost exclusively. Their lands are capital, and their slaves are capital, made so by their laws. In strictness of speech, they have no labor, in the sense in which that word is used as distinguished from capital, in the production of their cotton crop, if we except the overseers and the few white men who are employed. By the institutions and laws of the South, their slaves are property—capital, in the same sense that our machinery is ; and when they talk of protecting their labor, they mean, if they mean anything, protecting their property. With these facts staring them in the face, will southern gentlemen on this floor have the effrontery to tell us that the doctrine of protection is a contest between northern capital and southern labor ? It is a contest between southern capital, or what is made so by their laws, and the free labor of the North."

When the madness of Mr. Tyler's administration manifested itself in the attempt to annex Texas to the Union, I took early and decided ground against it: first, in an elaborate letter addressed to the Whig Committee of the county of Worcester, published in the *Spy* and in the *Ægis*, of August 15, 1844 ; and afterwards, in a speech on the floor of the House, I predicted that the annexation of Texas would so strengthen the South as to enable them to break down the protective policy which sustained the free labor of the North, which was consummated by the votes of Texan Senators. I also predicted that it would involve us in an unjust war with Mexico, which has likewise been verified. On both of these occasions, I denounced the measure as one designed to extend and foster the slave institution. In the speech in the House, January 20, 1845, I used this language:

"But we are told by Mr. Secretary Calhoun that the Constitution guarantees to the southern States the protection of slavery.—If we are bound to take in new slave territory to secure slavery, have we not a right to turn out some of the present slave States to secure freedom ? If the guarantees of the Constitution require us to prevent abolition in a foreign nation for the benefit of the South, they require us to abolish slavery at home for the benefit of the North.

"But, sir, I have no belief at all in guarantees of this kind. Congress has no power to interfere with slavery in the slave States. No northern man contends for it—they all disclaim it. But the same latitude of construction adopted by Mr. Calhoun would give them full power in the premises. I say northern men on this floor do not wish to interfere with slavery in the South. We know that it is beyond our control in the States. If it be an evil and a curse, as most southern men will admit, the responsibility is with those who alone have the power to abolish it. And, on the other hand, if it be the *greatest of blessings*, we are willing that they shall enjoy all its fruits—we ask no portion for ourselves ; we will not disturb them in the enjoyment of such a good. Not that we feel indifferent to the subject. Our sympathy is with the oppressed. We wish to see them raised to the condition of freemen. But as the Constitution puts the subject beyond our control, we shall not attempt to violate its provisions. But southern gentlemen must not expect that we will lend our influence to extend an institution which we believe to be at war with the fundamental principles of law and morals, and to reflect dishonor upon the American character. *I can never, with my vote, or with my voice, sustain such an institution.*

"I say I cannot do it, and hence I cannot vote for the annexation of Texas. For it cannot be disguised, that Texas is sought solely for the purpose of extending slavery and strengthening the slave power. It is not, as has been said, 'to enlarge the area of freedom,' but to extend the bounds of slavery and strengthen slave power in the councils of the nation. It is a device, got up by Messrs.

Upshur and Calhoun, to place slavery on a more permanent foundation, and to give the South a balance of power; and we are called upon to annex Texas to the United States, as I before said, to destroy the balance of this Union, and to establish, strengthen, and perpetuate upon the land what we have already pronounced piracy upon the ocean."

When the President of the United States, to gratify an inordinate ambition, and acquire further territory for the purpose of adding to the number of slave States, had involved the nation in a war, I was among the very first to reprobate the measure, and expose the conduct of the Executive. I was one of the *fourteen* who voted against the war bill, and I embraced the earliest opportunity to give my views of the war and its object.

On the 14th of May, 1846, the day after the war bill became a law, I expressed myself in a speech, as follows :

"I have no boasts to make of my devotion to my country. I am a citizen of this country, and my fortune is connected with hers. When she is right, I will sustain her; and if I believe her to be in the wrong, I will not give her up, but will point out her errors, and do all in my power to bring her into the right; so that, if war must come, and our young men must be offered on the altar of our country, we may safely commend them to the God of battles—to that Being who rules in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. I desire the prosperity of my country, and nothing but my devotion to her interest, and to the higher principles of moral rectitude, induced me to separate from those with whom I have generally acted. I could not consent to involve my country in a war which I believe to be unnecessary and unjust—a war of conquest—brought about by ambitious men to answer personal and party purposes.

"Before I conclude my remarks, I must notice another subject closely connected with this, and one out of which our present difficulties have grown. Gentlemen with whom I have acted on this floor will bear me witness, that I have not been in the habit of going out of my way to attack the institutions of the South. Though I have always regarded slavery as an evil—a political and moral wrong—having no power over it in the States, I have been disposed to leave it with those who have it in their keeping, to manage according to their own sense of propriety. *I will not give it my countenance—it shall not be extended by me.* This war is one of the first fruits of the annexation of Texas. And that measure was got up and consummated to extend and perpetuate slavery. Mr. Calhoun, in the correspondence submitted with the treaty, avowed this to be the *primary* object of annexation. I opposed it then, and I voted against the war because its object is to extend, not the "area of freedom," but the area of bondage. And I wish to commend this subject specially to the gentleman from Illinois, whose bosom glows with such ardent patriotism, that he is willing to spill rivers of blood in this war with Mexico. He is so devoted to his country, and so in love with her institutions, that he is willing to sustain, with blood and treasure, an institution at war with the first principles of a republican government—*liberty and equality*. He denounces Mexico as an uncivilized and barbarous power, and still he aspires to be a leader in a policy designed to extend and perpetuate slavery, and to plant on the soil of Mexico an institution which she, barbarous as she is, and corrupt as the gentleman would represent her to be, would not permit to pollute her soil. This is the position of the gentleman who denounces all as traitors who will not bow to the dictation of the majority on this floor."

In debate on the President's message, December 16, 1846, alluding to the motives which led to the war, I used the following language :

"The President wished to distinguish his administration, and he wished to distinguish it by a further accession of territory; he wished to acquire a large portion of territory in that section of the Union, in order to give the South a perpetual preponderance in the councils of the nation. There is a deep feeling in the country against the extension of slavery. There are thousands upon thousands in the northern section of this Union (and I allude to no fanatics, but to sober, deliberate, and substantial men—men who have the good of the country at heart) who would resist, by every means in their power, the establishment of slavery in these Mexican provinces, if they should be annexed to these United States. This feeling is both strong and deep, and the prosecution of this war of conquest is contributing daily to the increase of that feeling. Let this war go on; let victory crown our arms till Mexico shall yield up a large portion of her territory; and we should have questions of internal regulations, which would be more difficult to settle than the boundary between us and Mexico."

Again, February 13, 1847, on the Three Million Appropriation bill, I took part in the debate, in which was involved the acquisition of territory, and the disposition to be made of it, and employed this language:

"We see in the case before us a fruitful source of discord. The war was commenced for the conquest of territory to convert into slave States. The most that the Administration desire, in the first instance, is to acquire the territory. The South declare upon this floor that if territory is acquired, it must be slave territory; that they will not submit to be surrounded by a cordon of free States. On the other hand, the North have resolved, and firmly resolved, that not another foot of slave territory

shall be added to the Union. Here, then, an issue is directly made, and I have no doubt but that the North will be found true to her principles, when the day of trial comes.

"I tell you, Mr. Chairman, that the North will stand firm. You cannot judge of the present by the past. Within two years there has been a radical change in public sentiment in the free States. The Texas outrage, followed by this iniquitous war, both for the extension of slavery, has brought the people to their senses. They have seen this Administration breaking through the barriers of the Constitution to sustain and extend slavery, and the people in the free States have resolved that the evil shall extend no farther. I say to the South, in all frankness, you will find northern sentiment immovable on this subject, "as firm as nature, and as fixed as fate."

When the subject of territorial governments was under debate, June 20, 1848, I uttered my sentiments on slavery thus:

"That slavery is a great political evil, no reflecting man can deny. In a pecuniary point of view, it is a burden to any community where it exists. The idleness which it induces, the degradation of labor which naturally arises from it, mark it every where as a withering curse to the community, too plain and palpable to be denied.

"But the institution of slavery is a political evil in another respect; it weakens a State not only in its pecuniary but in its physical resources. It is an element of danger; it contains the seeds of insurrection. But slavery is a great moral as well as political evil. So long as oppression is a moral wrong, slavery will stand forth as one of the crying sins of the land. To convert men into chattels, and expose them at public sale, tearing husbands from wives, and children from parents; to degrade human beings, created in the image of God, and render them mere beasts of burden; to deprive them of all means of cultivating their moral nature, and of reading the word of eternal life—if this be not a moral wrong, I know of nothing which is worthy of that appellation. I am willing to admit all the palliation which can be urged in favor of the institution. But nothing, in my estimation, can justify it. It begins in a wrong, in a violation of the first principles of natural right—that of enjoying personal liberty, and the fruit of one's own labor. And this first violation of moral right must of necessity lead on to others.

"Believing slavery to be a moral and a political evil, I feel it my duty to use my influence to exclude it from the Territories. I should be false to myself, to my constituents, to my country, and even to the Territories themselves, did I not do all in my power to save them from this calamity.

"I am aware that northern men who speak their sentiments freely upon this subject are denounced as *fanatics* and *hypocrites*, but these denunciations have no terror for me. If to sympathize with the oppressed and down-trodden be fanaticism, I am willing to be called a *fanatic*. If a desire to limit a corrupt and corrupting institution be hypocrisy, I glory in being called a *hypocrite*. If a wish to save the nation from disgrace, and free soil from a withering blight, be treason to the Union, set me down as a *traitor*.

"Entertaining these views, I can never by my vote doom human beings to servitude who have been guilty of no crime. I should be false to myself—to every principle of humanity—to every sentiment of honor, were I to do it. Slavery in the States is beyond the reach of this Government. Over it, as a State institution, I have no control. But when it is proposed to extend the institution into free territory, it becomes a matter of national concernment, and God forbid that I should record my vote to extend and enlarge its present area, or pollute with this institution one foot of freedom's sacred soil."

The President in one of his messages had volunteered the opinion that Texas had a just claim to all that part of New Mexico lying east of the Rio Grande. This claim allowed, would extend slavery over the whole of this vast tract of country. I took an early opportunity to expose the fallacy of his reasoning, and also that of the Texas members in relation to that claim. That speech, which was in fact the only one made upon the subject, was printed in the Appendix to the Congressional Globe, 1st session, 30th Congress, and concludes as follows:

"Having, I believe, noticed all the principal arguments which have been advanced in support of the claims of Texas, I will state in conclusion what I believe to be the grand motives of those who urge these claims. Texas of course has a pecuniary interest in the extension of her boundary, because by the terms of annexation she is allowed to retain all the unappropriated lands within her territory. Another object which Texas and the South have in view, is the extension of slavery. They knew that if New Mexico, or the Sante Fe country, be given up to Texas, she has power to continue slavery there; but if it should be held as a territory of the United States, it would be competent for Congress to apply the ordinance of 1787 to it, and thereby continue it free territory. We are free to admit that Mr. Polk is consistent with himself. As he commenced the war for the acquisition of slave territory, it is natural to suppose that he would do all in his power to secure the end for which he has been toiling. But it becomes the friends of freedom to be upon their guard, and to take all just measures to defeat the infamous objects of a corrupt administration."

These extracts will show the course I have pursued in relation to the great questions of annexation, slavery, and the Mexican war. Whether my course has been

wise or unwise, I leave others to determine. But I claim, and have a right to claim, uniformity and consistency of action. I have followed the dictates of my own conscience, regardless of the opinions of others, and have done what I believed to be for the best interest of my country. I have opposed, and shall continue to oppose, the extension of slavery; and neither the denunciations of fanatics of the South, nor the slanders of my former friends of the fifth district, will ever induce me to deviate from that my settled purpose. But in the face of all these facts, I have been accused of being treacherous to the cause of freedom—of betraying the interests of the North—of deserting my former friends in the day of trial—and of lending my influence to the cause of slave extension. Now, fellow citizens, I pronounce these charges *base calumnies*; and I challenge the production of one particle of proof to sustain them. My accusers have produced none, and they can produce none. On the contrary, so far as I know or have heard, they have admitted that I have uniformly spoken and acted in accordance with my own professions, and their own wishes. Of what then do they complain? The only thing they specify is voting for General Taylor. Yes, these boasted friends of freedom with “free soil” and “free suffrage” inscribed upon their banner, are ready to denounce as a traitor every one who cannot see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and vote for the candidate whom the Democratic Barnburners of New York forced upon them.

In relation to General Taylor, my course has always been an open one. I was opposed to his nomination. I was opposed to it, because he was a southern man. I thought it was due to the North that the candidate should be taken from that section of the country. I was opposed to it, because I preferred a civilian to a military man. I made no secret of my opposition; and I was so well satisfied that General Taylor would not obtain the nomination, that, I confess, up to the time of the Convention, I had not made any very thorough examination into his character or qualifications. But when the nomination was made, I felt it my duty to investigate his character and qualifications more fully than I had done before. I examined his letters, reviewed his correspondence, and having an opportunity to converse with several distinguished Whigs who were personally acquainted with General Taylor, I embraced these opportunities and obtained all the information in my power concerning him. And I am free to admit, that the closer I studied his character, the more became satisfied with the nomination. I found that he was a man of vigorous intellect, of sound judgment, of elevated patriotism, of incorruptible integrity; that he was simple and unaffected in his manners, exemplary in private life, industrious in his habits, and systematic in the transaction of business, possessing great clearness of perception and firmness of purpose; that with a high moral sense, he united stern justice with the most condescending mercy; and that by the goodness of his heart and the force of his character, he was calculated to win the affections and command the confidence of those around him. I was satisfied that he was a Whig of the old school, utterly opposed to Executive usurpation, and if elected, the highest object of his ambition would be to administer the Government on the principles of the Constitution, and to walk in the footsteps of the Fathers of the Republic. I was also impressed with the idea, that the Whigs who went into the Convention and took part in its deliberations, and pressed the claims of their respective candidates, were bound in honor to abide by the nomination; and especially, as I was assured by many respectable members of that body, that the nomination was fairly made.

Being aware that either General Taylor or General Cass must be the next President, I carefully compared their views and sentiments, their pledges and the lines of policy they were bound to pursue. I was satisfied that General Cass was in favor of further acquisition of territory, while General Taylor was pledged against that ruinous policy; that General Cass had pledged himself to veto any bill which should contain the Wilmot proviso, while General Taylor stood committed to carry out the will of Congress, should they pass such a bill. Such were the conclusions to which I came, after a careful examination and much serious reflection.

After the nomination of Mr. Van Buren, I was confident that he could not obtain

a single electoral vote, and that supporting him was increasing the chances for the election of Gen. Cass. Under these circumstances, I felt it to be my duty to give my support to the nominee of the Whig Convention. I should have been false to myself, false to my Whig principles, false to the true cause of anti-slavery, if I had given my vote for Gen. Cass or for Mr. Van Buren, thereby increasing the chances for the election of Gen. Cass. I regretted that our candidate was not a northern man. I regretted, as I did four years before, that our candidate was a slaveholder. But I voted for Judge Thomas as a Taylor elector in 1848, on the same principle that I and my Whig friends in the district voted for Judge Allen as a Clay elector in 1844.

As I do not claim infallibility, I may have erred in judgment. But I had no doubt that Gen. Taylor would sign a bill containing the Wilmot proviso, and that General Cass would veto such a bill; and, entertaining these views, I never gave a more sincere anti-slavery vote in my life than the one I gave for Gen. Taylor. If it be deserting Whig principles to withhold a vote from Martin Van Buren, I am guilty of desertion. If it be bowing to the slave power to support the only candidate who would permit Congress to exclude that institution from the Territories, then am I obnoxious to the charge. If doing what I believed would best promote the interest of my country by circumscribing slavery within its present limits be treason, I glory in being considered a traitor. I had done what every honest man should do—follow the dictates of his own judgment. I have done what every patriot is bound to do—seek the best interest of his country. I had no personal objects to secure; on the contrary, I was apprised early, long before I had taken any active part in the canvass, that unless I came into the support of the new movement, a "Free Soil" candidate would be run against me. But, preferring the approval of my own conscience to any preferment or political support, I took what, with my views, was the only honorable course, and supported the candidate who would best carry out my principles.

But for this honest, independent, and, I believe, consistent course, I have been abused and vilified by some of my former friends. I do not complain that they have voted for Judge Allen. They are freemen like myself, and have the same right to cast their suffrages for the man of their choice that I have. But I have reason to complain of the means which have been employed to injure me. The oldest Whig press in the county, which I have patronized, and to whose columns I have contributed for a long series of years, has rudely assailed me, calling my sincerity in question, and more than intimating that I have been bought up by the promise of office. Now, I pronounce all such charges *utterly false*. No Whig, or body of Whigs, ever, even by the most distant insinuation, intimated to me that adhering to Gen. Taylor would secure to me any office, or even the nomination to any office. But, on the other hand, if I felt at liberty to *betray private confidence*, or to *publish private letters*, I could show that it was distinctly intimated to me by certain Free Soil gentlemen, that uniting with their party would secure to me a re-election to Congress, or a nomination to the highest office in the State.

But these personal attacks have been characterized by a perfidy rarely to be met with. Early in the canvass the editor or publishers of the *Spy* exposed to the gaze of their friends, an article written by me about two years ago, and published at the time as an editorial in that paper. But this was not all; they must go further. Accordingly, this article, in connection with my name, was stricken off in a handbill, and a brother of the editor started on a mission to attend Whig meetings, to interrupt Whig speakers, and to distribute this handbill. But even the editor of the *Spy* could not, thus early, make up his mind to endorse this species of professional treachery; for the handbill was perfectly anonymous—not even bearing the name of the office whence it issued. But the master spirit of this movement, Hon. CHARLES ALLEN, more bold than his agent of the *Spy*, came out in a public meeting at Worcester on Saturday evening, October 28, read the handbill, and ascribed it to me by name, and stated that it was published in the *Spy* at the time of its date. On Monday morn-

ing, October 30, the pliant agent of Mr. Allen appeared in his paper, and charged me with writing the article which he published in 1847 as his own, placing it under the editorial head; and to account for his publishing it as an editorial, and to justify the breach of confidence in now revealing the name of the writer, the editor makes the following statement:

"Soon after the adjournment of Congress, in the spring of 1847, a gentleman, high in the councils of the nation, sought and had an interview with us in relation to the situation, aspect, and future course of political affairs. He began the conversation by some kind inquiries in relation to the Spy. He then proceeded with some complimentary remarks upon the ability, consistency, and political tact with which it had been conducted; remarks which we have no disposition to repeat, and which, fortunately, are not necessary to the object in view. He proceeded to say that the position of the Spy was important, and its influence on the public mind a salutary one. It was fortunate for the Whig party that it had such a paper here, and one that did exercise such an influence. He then took a view of the existing state of public affairs, especially in reference to the approaching Presidential election, and said that the time had come when it became the North to take higher and more decided ground than she had done, and cause her feelings, her interests, and her rights to be respected. We had submitted long enough to the dictation of the South. We should now not only demand, but insist on, the right of having the next President taken from the free States.

"He said, in addition, that, at the close of the session of Congress, a conference had been held between several northern Whigs, who have agreed very harmoniously as to the line of policy it was proper to pursue. He said that Hon. Charles Hudson had agreed to prepare several articles on leading political questions for publication in several Whig papers, calculated to have a favorable influence on the public mind, and that it was desirable that some of them should appear in the Spy. He urged the importance of giving the articles a leading position as editorials, as they would have more influence as such than they would as anonymous communications. To this we replied, that though we were not in the habit of adopting the writing of others, yet, as we believed the opinions of Charles Hudson coincided with our own, we had no special objection to doing it in the present instance; and we parted with the understanding that it was to be done, if, on the receipt of the articles, they met our approbation.

"Not long after we received the first number of the series, and it was followed by others in succession for our weekly issues. They were published according to understanding as editorials."

Such is the apology of the editor of the Spy for degrading his professional character by violating private confidence. And what excuse does this furnish him, even admitting it to be true? None whatever. But, as far as I am connected with this conversation, it is utterly untrue. I never agreed to write any articles for the Spy, or for any other paper, as above related. I never authorized any person to apply to the editor to publish any articles editorially, nor did I write the article in question at the request or suggestion, or even with the knowledge, of any man living. The article was my own in every possible sense, and for it I alone am responsible. I cannot say what conversation the editor of the Spy may have had with some "gentleman high in the councils of the nation," but, from the best information of which such a vague statement admits, I am constrained to believe that this story, in all its essential features, is a fabrication, gotten up for the purpose of exciting prejudice against me, of commending "The Spy," and of hiding the treachery of which the editor virtually admits himself to be guilty.

But Judge Allen, not content to avail himself of the professional treachery of the Spy, in his speech of October 30th, reads and then publishes to the world a *private letter* which I wrote him before the Philadelphia Convention. I will not remark upon this violation of private confidence, because every one, not entirely wrapt up in selfishness and devoid of honorable feeling, knows that there is a sacredness in private intercourse which no gentleman will violate. But, after all, what important fact has Judge Allen, or his satellite of the Spy, brought to light by these violations of private friendship? They have disclosed just what I have always openly declared: that I was opposed to the nomination of Gen. Taylor; that I was in favor of excluding slavery from the Territories; that I preferred a northern candidate for the Presidency; and thought Judge McLean might be the most available man.

Whilst this conspiracy against me was developing itself, and the Spy was daily pouring forth its vituperation, I published no *private letters*, I wrote no articles justifying myself, or exposing the conduct of my opponents. I felt that there was a

delicacy in appearing from the press in defence of myself. Nor had I any desire of converting the canvass into a personal altercation; and therefore I refrained from any publication. But, in the mean time, my opponents were active. In the language of the bard—

“ This prints my letters, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, subscribe, subscribe.”

But not being disposed to imitate certain examples and subscribe largely for copies of this Van Buren paper, or enter into a personal contest, I remained silent.

“ Though want provok'd and madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with bedlam or the mint.”

I had no subsidized press at my command; no treacherous editor to do my bidding; no brother pampered by the commonwealth, and fitted by long experience for rancorous debate, to let loose like a tiger upon my rival; no disappointed, restless Democrats to aid my cause, or transfer their friends—if transfer it can be called—to me and Martin Van Buren. Nor did the party with which I acted, while they were proclaiming “free soil” and “free suffrage,” attempt to make slaves of the people, by adopting every means within their power to induce them, in advance, to sign written pledges that they would vote with a certain party when the election should arrive.

Now, gentlemen, keeping in mind that the only fact brought against me to sustain all the crimes charged, is that I refused to vote for Martin Van Buren, and voted for Gen. Taylor, I wish to inquire who are those that have pursued me with so much virulence, and who seem disposed to magnify my faults almost to capital offences? They are gentlemen who, in 1840, voted and spoke and wrote against Mr. Van Buren, declaring him to be a corrupt, intriguing politician, bowing down to the South, and betraying every northern interest; gentlemen who, in 1844, voted for Mr. Clay, a southern man and a slaveholder; one of whom declared at Philadelphia that he preferred Gen. Taylor to Mr. Clay; gentlemen who commenced their late political career by declaring that they were Whigs, and could not vote for Gen. Taylor *because he was not a Whig*, and then went over in a few days to Martin Van Buren, the prince of the most radical Democracy. These are the gentlemen who set themselves up as patterns of political consistency and purity.

I have no disposition to attack others, or to say an unkind word against those with whom I have formerly acted; but my duty to myself requires that I should vindicate my character, and in doing so I am compelled to show the baseness of the attack. As the Spy has been made the organ of the party, I wish to show the course pursued by that press. In 1840 the Spy, edited then by the same individual who edits it now, was unsparing in its denunciations of Mr. Van Buren, and in 1844 it advocated strenuously the cause of Mr. Clay, and reprobated, in the strongest manner, the conduct of the Liberty party in presenting a third candidate, which would tend directly to defeat Mr. Clay, and bring Texas into the Union. And after the nomination of General Taylor, the Spy came out with an editorial, calling upon the Whigs to be united. In that paper of June 14, 1848, before the Spy had received its new light, we find the following manly sentiments:

“ Many who are disappointed with the nomination will, nevertheless, sustain it, for the purpose of defeating Gen. Cass, *who is justly considered the most obnoxious of any man who has been proposed for the nomination*. But many others, we are bound to believe by their own declarations, will never support it under any consideration. Greatly as we are disappointed and mortified by the nomination, **WE SHALL NOT BE DRIVEN THEREBY FROM OUR SUPPORT OF WHIG PRINCIPLES, WHIG MEASURES, AND WHIG MEN.** *The principles and objects of the party are too vital in their character to be thus easily abandoned; and there are other things than the election of President to be attended to in the approaching election, more important even than the choice of a Chief Magistrate.* We trust, therefore, that those who are dissatisfied with the nomination, and who undoubtedly constitute a majority of the Whigs in the free States, *will not hastily or unadvisedly sever the present organization of the party.* They have the power in their hands, if they choose to exercise it, under their present organization, to decide the character of the next Congress; and the character of the Congress will decide that of the Administration. With a

true Congress, no new territory can be admitted to the Union where slavery is tolerated, nor can there be any legislation for the purpose of upholding slavery. LET US, THEN, ACT TOGETHER AS WHIGS, AND IN SUPPORT OF WHIG PRINCIPLES, AS WE HAVE HITHERTO DONE. Let us require, as a condition of our support, that no candidate shall be nominated for Congress who is not pledged against the extension of slavery, and against any legislation, the object of which is to uphold slavery where it now exists. If the people of the free States who are opposed to slavery will take this ground, they will assuredly control the next Congress. *But if they separate from the existing parties, and split up into factions, their influence will be lost, and a pro-slavery Congress will be elected. As regards the nomination for President, each man may decide for himself, whether he can give his vote to the nominee, for the purpose of defeating a more obnoxious candidate, or whether principle requires that he should withhold it altogether.*

"Looking at the signs of the times, we believe that Gen. Taylor will be elected. If elected, it will be as the *Whig nominee*, and, with such union as may be maintained without any sacrifice of principle, the election of President will carry with it, as it always does, the election of members of Congress. The opponents of slave extension and slave legislation have it in their power to give potency to their principles in that election, if they are wise and prudent. Will they not do it?"

Here the editor of the *Spy* declares that he "shall not be driven from the support of Whig principles, Whig measures, and Whig men;" that, if Gen. Taylor is elected, "it will be as a Whig nominee, and with such union as may be maintained *without any sacrifice of principle*," the election will carry with it a Whig Congress, and so secure the rights of the North; and hence, he calls upon his friends to "act together as Whigs in support of Whig principles, as we have heretofore done." And yet, in about one week, this same gentleman, after falsifying his own declarations, eating his own words, and abandoning every principle he had laid down for himself, denounces as a traitor every one who pursued the course which he marked out, and declared that they could pursue "without any sacrifice of principle."

But why did the editor of the *Spy*, after making these truly Whig and statesman-like declarations, repudiate them all in the short space of ten days? I will state what followed, and you may judge for yourselves. On the 21st of June, just seven days after the editor defined his position, the Hon. Charles Allen, in a public speech delivered to a large assembly in Worcester, made this significant declaration:

"I hope our friend of the *Spy* will see that there is something more than a *shower* coming; and I hope he will see that his *interest* is in boldly speaking out his principles, and let him be the *organ* here of what is emphatically the people's party—sprung from the people, sustained by the people—and he himself will be sustained also. *But, gentlemen, organs we must have in the cities and in the country, and WE CANNOT WAIT MANY DAYS FOR THEM.*"

After this emphatic declaration, "our friend of the *Spy*," without "waiting many days," became the "organ," the pliant instrument of the gentleman who assumed at Philadelphia the prerogative of dissolving the Whig party. I will make no comments upon this sudden conversion, but leave each one to draw his own conclusions.

And how is it with the Representative elect from the 5th district, who in person and by proxy has been so free in impeaching the motives of others? Does he stand above suspicion in relation to this whole matter? In his speech at Worcester on the 21st of June, Mr. Allen said: "We say, gentlemen, that Gen. Taylor is not a *Whig*, and we say that the convention has been *false to its duty and treacherous to the country*; first, in selecting for its candidate a man *who was not a Whig*." Here we have the charge of *treachery* brought against the National Whig Convention, because they selected a man who had declared that he "was a Whig, but not an ultra Whig;" and yet the author of this charge, after opposing Mr. Van Buren for years, finds it perfectly consistent to support for the highest office in the nation that artful, designing, *Democratic* politician.

Again, he says in his Worcester speech in June:

"Gen. Taylor was nominated on the fourth ballot; but, before the first ballot was taken, I was confident that he would be the candidate. At an early period I did not doubt but that he would be the candidate. And, if it had been necessary to give him the 170 votes on the first instead of the fourth ballot, he would have had them. The free States could not unite, because there was *treachery in their delegations*."

Now, if Mr. Allen had been sensible, before the balloting commenced, that there was treachery in the delegations, and that Gen. Taylor, a man whom he could not

support, would be selected in consequence of this treachery, he ought, as a high-minded and honorable man, to have left the convention at once. But, instead of that, he went into the convention, and voted for his own candidate; and, if Mr. Webster had obtained the nomination, he would, I think, have been among the first to denounce any man or set of men, who should have refused to abide by the nomination.

Judge Allen informs us that certain delegates, who voted for other candidates in the first instance, had made up their minds beforehand to vote ultimately for Gen. Taylor; and this he denounces as *treachery*. But how was it with himself? Did he not go into the convention, take part in its deliberations, and do what he could to commit that body to his own favorite candidate, after he had resolved—nay, entered into combination—to resist the nomination in case it should fall upon Gen. Taylor? I feel authorized to say, that a meeting was held in Massachusetts the latter part of May last, consisting of the gentlemen with whom Judge Allen is known to have sympathized and acted for two or three years past; that it was agreed at that meeting to organize a party in the State and Nation in opposition to Gen. Taylor, in the event that he should be nominated; that a committee was appointed to prepare an address to the people, to report at an adjourned meeting to be held on the first day of June; that this address was to be signed and put in circulation immediately after hearing of the nomination of Gen. Taylor, calling a convention to repudiate the nomination; that Judge Allen acted with them in such a manner, and harmonized so perfectly with these conspirators, that one of the seceding delegates from Massachusetts asserted, ten days before the convention assembled, that, in the event of Gen. Taylor's nomination, he should leave the convention immediately, and *the other would go with him*. Judge Allen and Mr. Wilson did leave the convention agreeably to this arrangement. Now, Judge Allen, knowing that private letters are more sacred in other men's hands than in his own, may deny this statement; but, if he and his brother delegate, who have denounced the nomination, will give full consent for the publication of their letters, the evidence will be forthcoming.

Having presented to you this general outline of the facts in the case, I now ask you, gentlemen, to reflect upon the subject, and decide for yourselves, who has acted the honorable part, and to whom the charge of treachery justly applies. I do not appear before you in the character of a suppliant. I ask nothing at your hands but strict justice. If I have been neglectful of my duty, and have betrayed the trust you have reposed in me—if I have deserted the great interests of freedom and humanity, and have lent myself to the cause of oppression, I am justly obnoxious to your censure. On the other hand, if I have devoted my time, and what little of talent I possess, faithfully to your interests, and have endeavored to promote the peace of the country by opposing a war I deemed to be unnecessary and unjust, and the honor of the nation by resisting the spread of an institution which I regard as the foulest blot upon the character of the Republic; if I have pursued these ends by the means which I deemed the wisest and the best, you will, I trust, permit me to retire to private life without reproach. But whatever may be your verdict, I shall carry with me into retirement, and to my grave, the consciousness of having followed the dictates of my own conscience, and pursued a course which I believed to be most productive of the cause of human freedom, and of the prosperity and happiness of our beloved country. I shall also carry with me the liveliest emotions of gratitude towards the thousands of my fellow-citizens who have approved of my well meant endeavors, and who have stood by me in evil report as well as good report.

But, before I close this address, I must be permitted to say a word to my Free Soil friends. I have felt it to be my duty to myself and to my Whig friends who have acted with me, to the cause of truth and justice, to speak freely concerning the conduct of certain men in the district; but I am far, very far, from imputing anything dishonorable to the great body of the Free Soil party. On the contrary, I believe, and I rejoice in the belief, that you are sincere, and have acted from a sense of

duty. You have felt as I have felt, that slavery is a grievous wrong, and ought not to be extended; you have felt as I have felt, that the North were justly entitled to the Presidency. We have differed only in relation to the best means of securing those ends. You have been led to believe that the nomination and support of Mr. Van Buren were the most effectual means of limiting the institution of slavery; while I have believed that, under all the circumstances of the case, they tended directly to extend it. You were led, by the representations of artful or misguided men, to believe that Mr. Van Buren would secure the votes of many of the States; while I was satisfied, from the first, that he could not obtain a single electoral vote. You have viewed the great movement in New York as a grand demonstration in favor of freedom; while I have looked upon it with distrust, and regarded it as an artful political manœuvre on the part of the leading Barnburners to gain ascendancy in that State. But while we have differed in opinion, I have not, for a moment, believed that you intended to do any thing dishonorable, or that you had any sympathy with the measures which certain of your leaders have adopted. I know hundreds of you too well, and have witnessed your highminded course too frequently, to believe that you could justify the conduct of some of your prominent men in treacherously publishing private correspondence to promote their own sinister ends. And I will say to you, in conclusion, that as I claim to have acted faithfully with reference to the great cause of human freedom, which is now agitating the country, so you will always find me devoted to that interest. But I cannot go with some who have acted with you in denouncing the Constitution of the country, and in declaring that the Union ought to be dissolved. If the Constitution is wrong, let it be amended. I will go for any improvement; but I have, I confess, no sympathy with that system of political quackery which would destroy the disease by killing the patient.

Fellow-citizens of the 5th district, you have elected a representative of acknowledged ability, and one who will undoubtedly strive to promote your interests. But whether the means by which he has been elected, or the peculiar position he occupies, will render him more efficient for good than his colleagues, time alone must determine. But of this I am certain, that he will not, that he *dare not*, deviate materially from his colleagues, or from the course pursued by his humble predecessor, on all great questions in relation to human freedom. He may agitate, he may provoke, he may personally, or through the agency of others, disturb and distract the Whig party, but when he comes to act on questions connected with slavery, he will be compelled to follow the line which has already been marked out for him by those who have gone before him.

And to my illustrious successor I will say, in the appropriate language of Banquo to Macbeth:

“Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promis’d; and, I fear,
Thou play’st most foully for’t.”

CHARLES HUDSON.

WASHINGTON, *February 20, 1849.*





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